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States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of  
Public Affairs

# Selected Speeches and News Releases

February 15 - February 22, 1990

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### Statement—

by Dr. Charles E. Hess, Assistant Secretary, Science and Education,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Feb. 20.

### News Releases—

USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Price for Upland Cotton

USDA Announces New Program to Control Salmonella Enteritidis in  
Poultry

Support Levels, Export Edible Sales Policy Announced for 1990 Crop  
Peanuts

1990 Census Workers to Retain Food Stamp Benefits

USDA Finds No Significant Risk in Transgenic Fish Experiment

Lavern Freeh Named to Head Trade Mission to Pakistan and Bangladesh

Conservation Planning Completed on 135 Million Acres of Highly  
Erodible Land

USDA Makes Additional Funds Available to Combat Fruit Flies in  
California

Virgil M. Rosendale Appointed Head of Packers and Stockyards  
Administration

Private Exporters Report Sales Activity for Pakistan

USDA to Provide Technical Assistance on Water Quality Special Projects

USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Rice Prices

*Continued on inside front cover.*

## **News Releases Continued.**

**Bernard Steinweg Named to Head Trade Mission to India**

**USDA Proposes Minor Reduction in Membership on Beef Promotion Board**

**Pond Algae Could Become Self-Regulating Fertilizer for Rice**

**USDA Plant Hardiness Map Updated First Time in 25 Years**

# Statement

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

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by Dr. Charles E. Hess, Assistant Secretary, Science and Education,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Feb. 20.

The United States Department of Agriculture, in full cooperation with other Federal agencies, has for many years been involved in research aimed at eradication of those plants from which illicit drugs are derived. These projects are conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service in accordance with recognized laboratory procedures.

Research into the use of biological controls or natural predators as a substitute for chemical agents has been an integral part of the USDA research program for at least a decade. This type of research can be applicable to drug-producing plants. These projects have not been publicized due to the obvious need for security of personnel and facilities. Accordingly, the Department is not at liberty to comment on the specifics of these programs.

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# News Releases

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

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## USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16, through midnight Thursday, Feb. 22.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1988 and 1989 crop base quality loan rates of 51.80 and 50.00 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates for the 1988 and 1989 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. Because the AWP in effect is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1989-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

Based on data for the week ending Feb. 15, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

*Chart on next page*

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price .....	76.71
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location .....	12.88
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton .....	2.20
Average U.S. location .....	0.39
Sum of Adjustments .....	-15.47
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE .....	61.24 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price .....	76.71
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price .....	-72.67
	4.04
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton .....	-4.75
	-0.71
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT .....	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Feb 22.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

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## USDA ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM TO CONTROL SALMONELLA ENTERITIDIS IN POULTRY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15—Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Jo Ann R. Smith today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is establishing a program to control the spread of Salmonella enteritidis (serotype enteritidis) in table-egg poultry flocks in the United States.

“Salmonella enteritidis is a growing problem for the \$3.2 billion egg industry and has emerged as a serious public health concern as well,” said Smith. “Strains of S. enteritidis are endemic in egg production flocks in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states, and are now expanding into Midwestern and Northwestern states.”

According to Smith, the control program will address the problem on two fronts: testing and certification of the primary and multiplier breeding flocks that produce the table-egg layers, and tracebacks and testing of



commercial table-egg layer flocks if and when they are implicated in human cases of *S. enteritidis*.

Interstate movement of chickens, eggs and associated articles from flocks infected or associated with *S. enteritidis* will be restricted, and all egg production breeding flocks must be classified "U.S. Sanitation Monitored" under the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), or meet the requirements of an equivalent state program, to move interstate.

Smith said that today's action is a logical progression from the Voluntary Model State Program for testing for *Salmonella enteritidis* that was initiated in 1988. That program was neither nationally accepted nor fully successful, primarily because both testing and reporting of *S. enteritidis* was not mandatory, Smith said.

On Feb. 1, USDA declared poultry diseases caused by *Salmonella enteritidis* endemic diseases of economic and public importance, making available \$6.8 million in additional funds to USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to implement the control program. This declaration is published in today's Federal Register.

Much of the control program work will be done through NPIP. APHIS oversees NPIP, a voluntary federal-state-industry program for improving poultry breeding stock and hatchery products.

In humans, the *Salmonella* bacteria can cause cramps, diarrhea, fever, and sometimes nausea and vomiting 5 to 72 hours after eating contaminated food. Some individuals, such as the elderly or the immune-compromised, can suffer serious and life-threatening effects from eating *Salmonella*-contaminated foods.

The interim rule establishing the program will be effective upon publication in the Feb. 16 Federal Register.

Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before April 17. An original and three copies of written comments referring to Docket No. 88-161 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md., 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573

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## **SUPPORT LEVELS, EXPORT EDIBLE SALES POLICY ANNOUNCED FOR 1990 CROP PEANUTS**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that the national average support level for 1990 crop quota peanuts will be \$631.47 per short ton, compared with \$615.87 for the 1989 crop.

The following provisions were also announced:

—The national average support level for additional peanuts will be \$149.75 per short ton, unchanged from the 1989 crop.

—1990 crop additional peanuts owned or controlled by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation will be sold for export edible use at no less than \$400 per ton, unchanged from the 1989 crop.

CCC outlays for 1990 crop year peanut loans to producer associations will be subject to a reduction of 1.4 percent under the deficit reduction sequester order.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, requires that the national average support level for the 1990 crop of quota peanuts reflect any increase in the national average cost of peanut production for the preceding year, excluding any change in the cost of land. This statute also provides that the quota support rate for the crop may not exceed the support rate for the preceding crop by more than 6 percent.

The national average support level for 1990 crop quota peanuts was increased from the 1989 level of \$615.87 per short ton based on data which indicated that the cost of producing 1989 crop peanuts was greater than the cost of producing 1988 crop peanuts.

The price support level for additional peanuts must be set at a level which ensures no loss to CCC from sales or disposal of the peanuts. In determining this level, USDA must consider the demand for peanut oil and peanut meal, the expected prices for other vegetable oils and protein meals and the demand for peanuts in foreign markets. The price support levels are subject to quality and other adjustments.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

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## 1990 CENSUS WORKERS TO RETAIN FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—Food stamp recipients in most states and U.S. territories will be able to work on the 1990 census without losing any benefits as a result of the extra income they earn, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official announced today.

The action, which is a waiver of the usual Food Stamp Program rules, is part of a demonstration project planned by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, which oversees the food stamp program.

Catherine Bertini, assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services, announced the project. "So far, all but seven states—Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, and New Hampshire—have indicated they would participate," she said.

States that participate will provide information to help FNS study the effects of short-term employment on long-term employability of food stamp recipients.

"States which are a part of this project will disregard income earned by temporary census workers when food stamp benefits are computed," said Bertini. "This will help get an accurate count of all people in the United States. In addition, it will allow those participating families some extra income, provide census with much-needed temporary assistance, help lead to permanent employment, and provide FNS with useful new information on the food stamp program."

Each state handles its own food stamp application and distribution process. Normally, additional income would lead to a reduction in a food stamp recipient's monthly benefits. The amount of benefits is computed on the basis of the number of people in a household, along with income, rent and other financial obligations, assets and other factors. A change in any of the factors, including income, can mean a change in the level of benefits.

The Census Bureau expects to hire some 300,000 temporary workers to help with the count of the nation's citizens, which takes place every 10 years. The census begins in April, and the bureau has already begun hiring census takers and support workers. Pay will range from \$4.50 to \$9 per hour, depending on the region and the type of work.

This demonstration project is the result of the combined efforts of the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce and FNS. The Family Support Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and



Human Services will conduct a similar demonstration project resulting in a similar waiver for recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

Phil Shanholtzer (703) 756-3286

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## **USDA FINDS NO SIGNIFICANT RISK IN TRANSGENIC FISH EXPERIMENT**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that a proposed USDA-funded experiment with transgenic carp presents no significant risks to the environment. The decision clears the way for the research to proceed pending final consideration of public comments.

The carp are termed “transgenic” because they contain an artificially transferred gene from another species, in this case a growth hormone gene from trout. The gene transfer was originally accomplished using techniques of recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (rDNA)

The research will take place in specially constructed outdoor ponds located at Alabama’s Agricultural Experiment Station at Auburn University, Auburn, Ala. John Patrick Jordan, administrator of USDA’s Cooperative State Research Service, said the research will determine if transgenic fish pass the growth hormone gene from one generation to the next and how the gene affects the development of the fish.

Through such experiments involving the new techniques of biotechnology, researchers hope to improve fish species used for commercial aquaculture, Jordan said.

USDA’s environmental assessment of the research and its proposed “Finding of No Significant Impact” was published for public comment in today’s Federal Register. Respondee’s will have 30 days to submit comments before USDA funds the research.

In the proposed research, nine transgenic carp will be artificially spawned indoors. The fry will then be stocked in 10 outdoor ponds, and, at about 3 months of age, 300 fish per pond will be individually marked for identification. These fish will be grown and studied for one year, and the experiment will be terminated before the fish reach sexual maturity.

This study, like many others approved by USDA, requires specific safety measures to protect the environment. Auburn has designed

numerous safety features to restrict access to the experimental site and prevent escape of the fish. These measures take into account such things as unusual rainfall and predation by birds and other animals.

Auburn's internationally known fisheries research program was started over 50 years ago. Lowell Frobish, director of the Experiment Station at Auburn, says the new tools of biotechnology are expected to play a major role in its fisheries research program.

Copies of the environmental assessment and proposed Finding of No Significant Impact are available in the Feb. 16 Federal Register, Part III, or may be obtained from USDA, Office of Agricultural Biotechnology, Room 321-A, Administration Bldg., 14th Street and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250.

Marti Asner (202) 447-9165

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## **LAVERN FREEH NAMED TO HEAD TRADE MISSION TO PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today named Dr. LaVern A. Freeh leader of a U.S. agricultural trade and development mission to Pakistan and Bangladesh. The mission is tentatively scheduled for March 8-20.

Dr. Freeh serves as vice president for public and international affairs at Land O'Lakes, Inc., a food and agricultural cooperative owned by 500,000 farmer-members. Prior to joining the cooperative, he served as assistant dean and head of special programs for the University of Minnesota's Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics, and director of the university's international programs.

"Pakistan is the 14th largest market for U.S. agricultural products," Yeutter said. "In addition, these two countries are major recipients of U.S. food aid. Dr. Freeh's background in international affairs and private trade development makes him a natural to lead this mission."

Congress authorized the missions program in December 1987 to encourage greater participation by the U.S. private sector and foreign countries in U.S. agricultural trade and development activities overseas. The mission to Pakistan and Bangladesh will bring the number of countries visited by U.S. missions to 15.



In addition to U.S. government representatives, three to six private sector representatives, yet to be selected, also will be part of the team. All members of the mission will be chosen for their knowledge of U.S. export programs, and of the development needs, trade potential and economies of the two countries. After completion of the mission, members will report their findings and recommendations to the president and Congress.

For further information, contact Wayne W. Sharp, U.S. coordinator, Agricultural Trade and Development Missions Program, Room 3058-S, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250-1000; telephone (202) 382-0368.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

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## **CONSERVATION PLANNING COMPLETED ON 135 MILLION ACRES OF HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—Conservation plans have been developed on about 135 million acres of the nation's approximately 140 million acres of highly erodible cropland, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service reported today.

"We in SCS made a commitment to see that every farmer who wanted a conservation compliance plan got one by the deadline of Dec. 31, 1989," said SCS Chief Wilson Scaling. "Farmers and ranchers themselves have made a strong commitment to soil and water conservation with these plans. In fact, they have already fully implemented plans on 27 percent of the highly erodible cropland."

Of the highly erodible cropland without plans, about 5 million acres are temporarily exempted from having a plan until soil surveys are completed. The remaining acres include situations where the land is no longer being used for cropping or where the person has decided not to develop a plan at this time.

"The nation can be proud of the enormous conservation effort underway as a result of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985," Scaling said.

Scaling encouraged farmers to examine their plans carefully and to be sure they understand what they've agreed to do this year. Each plan contains individual conservation practices and schedules for their

installation agreed to by the producer and the local conservation district. “If farmers have questions, now’s the time to call or come in and talk about it at their local SCS offices,” Scaling said.

The following table summarizes, state by state, acreage with conservation compliance plans developed, acreage with plans fully implemented, and the percentage of land for which plans have been fully implemented.

### Conservation Compliance Plans Completed and Implemented

	Acres With Conservation Compliance Plans	Acres With Plans Fully Implemented	Percent of Plans Fully Implemented
Alabama	1,691,223	347,266	20.5
Alaska	51,840	16,248	31.3
Arizona	910,515	798,250	87.7
Arkansas	493,455	159,518	32.3
California	983,573	366,186	37.2
Colorado	9,749,749	2,389,280	24.5
Connecticut	11,461	1,163	10.1
Delaware	11,128	4,390	39.5
Florida	215,244	92,379	42.9
Georgia	920,878	465,862	50.6
Hawaii	81,309	11,359	14.0
Idaho	3,041,469	976,429	32.1
Illinois	4,303,356	637,102	14.8
Indiana	2,603,382	551,012	21.2
Iowa	10,774,831	1,817,646	16.9
Kansas	12,240,382	3,508,387	28.7
Kentucky	3,285,225	1,044,156	31.8
Louisiana	212,129	72,706	34.3
Maine	147,578	95,445	64.7
Maryland	306,180	33,707	11.0
Massachusetts	16,285	4,298	26.4
Michigan	573,875	200,340	34.9
Minnesota	2,083,035	880,711	42.3
Mississippi	1,561,376	447,906	28.7
Missouri	5,564,61	1,520,454	27.3
Montana	13,670,553	2,659,934	19.5
Nebraska	9,619,657	3,468,282	36.1

Nevada	146,773	78,179	53.3
New Hampshire	5,698	1,420	24.9
New Jersey	78,291	6,067	7.7
New Mexico	1,852,475	480,251	25.9
New York	925,454	319,466	34.5
North Carolina	1,375,807	116,390	8.5
North Dakota	5,508,105	691,219	12.5
Ohio	1,732,675	230,092	13.3
Oklahoma	4,952,813	1,197,766	24.2
Oregon	1,538,352	532,541	34.6
Pennsylvania	1,996,884	226,648	11.4
Rhode Island	442	293	66.3
South Carolina	369,219	151,454	41.0
South Dakota	3,792,090	739,188	19.5
Tennessee	2,438,949	293,716	12.0
Texas	12,857,781	4,233,763	32.9
Utah	647,624	499,868	77.2
Vermont	95,649	17,649	18.5
Virginia	1,006,830	89,792	8.9
Washington	3,648,732	948,232	26.0
West Virginia	84,214	29,095	34.5
Wisconsin	3,545,791	1,907,850	53.8
Wyoming	1,000,697	639,371	63.9
NATIONAL	134,725,794	36,000,726	26.7

Diana Morse (202) 447-4772

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## USDA MAKES ADDITIONAL FUNDS AVAILABLE TO COMBAT FRUIT FLIES IN CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter has declared an emergency to provide funds for a program to detect, control and eradicate the spread of Mediterranean and Oriental fruit flies in California.

“This emergency action will make available \$15 million in additional funds to fight infestations of Medfly and Oriental fruit fly and prevent them from spreading to uninfested areas,” said Yeutter. “These infestations pose a serious economic threat to U.S. agriculture. They



could severely disrupt the \$12.3 billion fruit and vegetable industry and cost a half-billion dollars annually in lost export markets.”

Medfly and Oriental fruit fly are two of the world’s most destructive pests of fruits and vegetables, especially citrus fruit. If these pests became established in California and Florida, the citrus industry in those states alone could lose up to \$4.6 billion a year.

The fruit fly’s life cycle—about 21 to 30 days during summer—is short, so it reproduces quickly. This enables serious outbreaks to spread rapidly and cause major economic losses. Females lay eggs inside ripe fruit and vegetables, and the developing larvae feed on the pulp of these plant hosts and destroy their commercial and nutritive values.

Medfly infestations in Los Angeles, Santa Clara, San Bernardino and Orange Counties, and two Oriental fruit fly infestations in Los Angeles County have triggered intensive eradication programs there. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and county agricultural officials to eradicate these fruit fly infestations.

APHIS is releasing millions of sterile Medflies each week as part of the eradication effort. Flooding the area surrounding an infestation with large numbers of sterile flies, eliminates the possibility of fertile flies reproducing, and the pest literally breeds itself out of existence.

The federal-state quarantine regulations prohibit interstate movement of many fruits, vegetables, nuts and berries from quarantined areas unless they are accompanied by a certificate or limited permit, or meet other conditions established by the regulations.

The declaration of emergency was published in the Feb. 15 Federal Register.

Anita Brown (301) 436-7799

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## **VIRGIL M. ROSENDALE APPOINTED HEAD OF PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced the appointment of Virgil M. Rosendale as administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Packers and Stockyards Administration.

Rosendale will oversee policy development and daily operations for P&SA, the federal agency that implements the fair-trade provisions of the



Packers and Stockyards Act. P&SA operates regulatory programs that protect consumers and members of the livestock and poultry industries against unfair, deceptive or monopolistic business practices.

Yeutter said Rosendale's qualifications are well-suited to his new USDA responsibilities. "He brings to the job 30 years' experience running a successful livestock operation, and a wealth of leadership experience within the livestock industry," said Yeutter.

Rosendale has managed the operation of a 2,000-acre grain and livestock farm in Augusta, Ill. He is past president of the National Pork Producers Council (1976-78), former chairman of the board of the National Livestock Meat Board (1981-1982), and was the first president of the National Pork Board (1986-89).

His awards and recognitions include the National Hog Farmer Distinguished Service Award (1979), American Meat Institute Animal Agriculture Award (1981), and Master Farmer Award from Prairie Farmer magazine (1983).

Rosendale was graduated from the University of Illinois in 1957 with a bachelor's of science degree in agricultural education. In 1964, he earned a master's of science degree in animal science, specializing in animal genetics and meats.

Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623

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## **PRIVATE EXPORTERS REPORT SALES ACTIVITY FOR PAKISTAN**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16—Private exporters today reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 26,000 metric tons of soybean oil for delivery to Pakistan during the 1989-90 marketing year.

The marketing year for soybean oil began October 1.

USDA issues both daily and weekly export sales reports to the public. Exporters are required to report to USDA export sales of 20,000 metric tons or more of soybean oil, made in one day, to one destination by 3:00 PM eastern time on the next business day following the sale. Export sales of less than 20,000 tons must be reported to USDA on a weekly basis.

Thomas B. McDonald (202) 447-3273

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## **USDA TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON WATER QUALITY SPECIAL PROJECTS**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will provide \$810,000 in accelerated technical assistance by the Soil Conservation Service to farmers in 39 USDA water quality special projects, Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter announced today.

“The Soil Conservation Service will be working closely with farmers to help them develop conservation plans to reduce pollution from such sources as pesticides, fertilizers, animal waste, nutrients, and sediment,” Yeutter said. The 39 special projects in 28 states were announced by Yeutter on Feb. 5.

The goal of the special projects is to assist farmers and ranchers in solving problems caused by agricultural non-point source pollution of ground and surface water and to ensure that the public’s water supply is protected and improved.

The projects will be administered by state and county offices of USDA’s Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service with education and technical assistance from the SCS and USDA’s Extension Service.

Diana Morse (202) 447-4772

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 9.54 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 8.70 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 8.59 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.77 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$5.90 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$5.43 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$5.23 per hundredweight.



The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Feb. 27, at 3 p.m. EST, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

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## **BERNARD STEINWEG NAMED TO HEAD TRADE MISSION TO INDIA**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today named Bernard Steinweg leader of a U.S. agricultural trade and development mission to India. The mission is tentatively scheduled for March 22-31.

Steinweg represents the North American Export Grain Association. He is senior vice president of the Continental Grain Co. and also serves on the National Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee.

“In 1988, India imported almost \$500 million worth of U.S. agricultural commodities,” Yeutter said, “with wheat and wheat flour accounting for nearly half of the total. Steinweg’s background and experience with various export programs, especially in the grain sector, makes him an excellent choice as leader of this trade mission.”

Congress authorized the missions program in December 1987 to encourage greater participation by the U.S. private sector and foreign countries in U.S. agricultural trade and development activities overseas. The mission to India will bring the number of countries visited by U.S. missions to 16.

The mission will include representatives from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Three to six private sector representatives, yet to be selected, also will be part of the team. All members of the mission will be chosen for their knowledge of U.S. export programs, and of the development needs, trade potential and economy of India. After completion of the mission, members will report their findings and recommendations to the president and Congress.

For more information, contact Wayne W. Sharp, U.S. coordinator, Agricultural Trade and Development Missions Program, Room 3058-S, FAS, Washington, D.C. 20250-1000; telephone (202) 382-0368.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

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## USDA PROPOSES MINOR REDUCTION IN MEMBERSHIP ON BEEF PROMOTION BOARD

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing a minor reduction in the number of members on the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board as a result of changes in cattle inventories and in cattle and beef imports since the national beef promotion and research program was implemented in 1986.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the reductions are based on requirements of the 1986 beef promotion and research order, which is authorized by the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985.

"In the proposal, Indiana, Nebraska, Oregon and Tennessee would each lose one board member, while the importer unit of the board would gain one member. The board would have 110 rather than the current 113 members," Haley said. "Domestic cattle producer representation on the board would decline from 108 to 104, while importer representation would increase from 5 to 6," he said.

The proposed change is based on the recommendation of the board. The order provides that at least every three years, and not more than every two years, the board reviews the geographic distribution of U.S. cattle inventories and the volume of imported cattle, beef and beef products, reapportioning board membership accordingly.

Haley said that since 1986, the four states had experienced declines in cattle numbers ranging from 200,000 to 350,000 head, and these reduced inventories are below the number required to maintain each state's current number of members. Importers would be entitled to one more member because of increases in beef and cattle imports equivalent to about one million head of cattle, he said.

Details of the proposed changes will appear in the Feb. 23 Federal Register. Comments, postmarked no later than March 26, may be sent to Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2610-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. Copies of the proposed rule and additional information are available from Tapp.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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## POND ALGAE COULD BECOME SELF-REGULATING FERTILIZER FOR RICE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—Common pond algae, genetically changed in a laboratory, increased rice growth as much as commercial fertilizers in greenhouse tests by U.S. Department of Agriculture and University of Florida scientists.

The new genetic makeup of the blue-green algae causes it to produce ammonia only when surrounding rice plants need it, said Stephan L. Albrecht of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. He said the finding is an encouraging sign that future algae strains can be altered to get one that spurs plant growth in rice fields.

Algae used for the greenhouse tests increased growth eightfold, but did not do as well in the field. Albrecht said that's probably because the algae were lab-grown and not well adapted to field conditions.

If a future strain lives up to expectations, he said, its ability to supply ammonia only as needed could give rice growers a self-regulating fertilizer system.

Normally, the algae convert just enough nitrogen in the atmosphere into ammonia to make its own proteins, he said. But the new strain continues producing ammonia as long as nearby plants use it.

When rice stops taking in ammonia, the algae "know" it's in the environment and stops production, said Albrecht, a plant physiologist at the ARS Plant Stress and Protection Research Laboratory in Gainesville, Fla.

This on-and-off fertilizing system could mean less groundwater contamination, he said. Tests show that while rice with algae at its roots had some ammonia, there was none in the environment.

University of Florida scientists K.T. Shanmugam and Hart Spiller changed the algae by speeding up the natural mutation process. Then they worked with Albrecht to test it.

Now, the research team will try to improve algae's fertilizing ability when it's applied to fields. Algae collected from rice fields in Florida will be used to try to genetically change a strain already adapted to field conditions.

Albrecht emphasized that the work could take 15 years before rice growers will have something. The scientists envision growers would culture algae beside rice fields and flood them with the algae at irrigation time.

That could be cheaper and less labor intensive than commercial fertilizers, Albrecht said.

Jessica Silva (301) 344-3927

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## USDA PLANT HARDINESS MAP UPDATED FIRST TIME IN 25 YEARS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22—The new Plant Hardiness Zone Map, updated for the first time in 25 years, was released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Commercial nurseries, in particular, use the map's zones, which are based on average minimum temperatures, to determine when plants should be shipped to different parts of the country so they will survive if planted on receipt. Plant varieties are often catalogued by the zones in which they will survive and thrive.

For the first time, the map includes Alaska and Hawaii and is detailed enough to show county lines within the states. The map, also for the first time, includes Canada and Mexico, said National Arboretum director H. Marc Cathey, who oversaw the updating of the map. The National Arboretum, located here, is part of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

"Our borders are contiguous and we share many plants, both native and introduced. It is appropriate not to isolate the U.S. when talking about climate," Cathey said.

Data from 14,500 weather stations went into this update, more than twice as many stations than were used for the maps produced in 1960 and 1965, Cathey said.

With the additional data, small areas of microclimates are indicated for the first time. These are cool pockets caused by mountain top elevations and hot spots due to the heat of cities or protected valleys, Cathey explained.

"There are no signs of changes that might represent global warming," Cathey said. On both coasts, but particularly in the Southeast, he said, temperatures are 5 to 10 degrees cooler in the winter than on the previous map.

Meteorologist Mark Kramer of Meteorological Evaluation Services in Amityville, N.Y., which analyzed the data for ARS, said that "we can't



speculate about climate changes based on the map. The new USDA map tells us the weather has changed, but we don't know whether the climate is changing." Weather is day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year; climate represents the longer term, starting with about 30 years.

The wealth of new data used to create this issue of the map also allowed the borders of the zones to be drawn in much more detail than before. The borders are now more precise, with intricate edges reflecting where the zones interweave, Cathey said.

"The new map should eliminate some inconsistencies between gardeners' experiences with local weather and the previous map," he added.

The actual map unfolds to four feet by four feet and has 11 color-coded zones based on 10 degree Fahrenheit differences in average annual minimum temperatures. Each zone is divided into A and B regions based on 5 degree Fahrenheit differences.

Zone 11 is new, representing an almost frost-free zone on the southern tip of Florida, southern California, all but the mountainous areas of Hawaii, most of the coastline of the Yucatan in Mexico, the southern Baja peninsula and the Gulf of Mexico.

The data has also been added to the ARS Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN) data banks for the first time, making detailed winter hardiness information available about many plants. The map itself is not available electronically.

A version of the map featuring only the United States appears on the end papers for the National Arboretum Book of Outstanding Garden Plants, just released by Simon & Schuster.

Copies of the map are available only through the Government Printing Office (misc. publication 1475; stock number 001-00004550-04) for \$6.50. The Government Printing Office in Washington can be reached at 202-783-3238; there are regional offices around the country. USDA has no copies for sale.

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